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## Kai Lohrasp and Nebuchadrezzar.

By

Louis H. Gray.

The history of Nebuchadrezzar II., who ruled from 604 to 561 B. C., is wrapped in much obscurity. His own inscriptions (see WINCKLER in SCHRADER, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* III, 2, 10—71) give, somewhat strangely, no information whatsoever concerning his military expeditions. It is well known, however, that about 600 B. C. Jehoiakim, king of Judah, revolted against the Babylonians, and that Nebuchadrezzar marched against Jerusalem, captured it, and carried Jehoiachin, the son and successor of Jehoiakim, captive to Babylon together with a large number of Jews (597 B. C.). A few years later, Zedekiah, an uncle of Jehoiachin, revolted in his turn against Nebuchadrezzar who had set him on the throne of Judah. Once more the king of Babylon attacked Jerusalem and this time destroyed it. Zedekiah's sons were slain, he himself was blinded and imprisoned in Babylon, and the kingdom of Judah thus came to an end in 586 (see *II. Kings*, xxiv.—xxv.). To the Biblical account as here summarized Josephus and the classical writers add little of value regarding Nebuchadrezzar's expeditions against Jerusalem. In the Pahlavi literature, on the other hand, there is an item of interest in this connection which may have an actual historic basis.

The *Dinā-i Maīnōg-i Xirat*, a work of uncertain date, but probably written before the Arabic conquest of Persia (WEST, *SBE.*, xxiv. introd. 16—17), contains the following words in the Pahlavi

version (xxvii. 64—67, ed. SANJANA, 47; the passage is lacking, however, in the Pazand and Sanskrit translations, ed. WEST, 33, 94):  
*va min Kai-Lōhrāspō sūtō dena yehvūnt, aēyaš xūtāyih xūp kartō*  
*va dēn yazdānō sipāsdār yehvūnt, va Aurīšalam-ī Yehūtānō barā*  
*xēfrūnt va Yehūtānō vašūftō va pargandak kartō, va dēn-patīraftār*  
*Kai-Vištāspō min tanō-ī dena barēhīnt, ,And the advantage from*  
*Kai-Lōhrāsp was this, that dominion was well exercised by him,*  
*and he became a thanksgiver unto the sacred beings. He demol-*  
*ished the Jerusalem of the Jews, and made the Jews dispersed and*  
*scattered; and the acceptor of the religion, Kai-Vištāsp, was produced*  
*from his body' (tr. WEST, SBE. xxiv., 64—65). A similar statement*  
*occurs in the Dīnkart (v. I, 3—4, ed. SANJANA, 476, WEST, Grund-*  
*riss der iranischen Philologie, II. 93): madam sardārih-ī agartō hamkūn*  
*mūn vazlūntō zyašānō nīyākān pavan sipāh sardārih-ī ham-dōstīg,*  
*vispāxyakih-ī zag ram dēn sipāh-patih-ī Būxt-Narsiḥ.<sup>1</sup> madam akāri-*  
*nītanō-ī awarūnō-dātīh va vaṭ-kūnišnih-ī bandag sarāsar, va girān*  
*šēdāyazākīh va ziyān-ī ajšān, pavan šēdrunīnītag dahyūpatō Kai-*  
*Lōharāspō min Airān šatrō, levata Būxt-Narsiḥ, val Arūm Bētā-*  
*Makdis,<sup>2</sup> va zag kūstakō mānišnō, ,About the unswerving and co-*  
*operating chieftainship of those forefathers who went in mutually-*  
*friendly command of troops, the complete enclosure of that tribe*  
*within the military control of Būxt-Narsiḥ. About the disabling of*  
*vicious habits and evil deeds which are entirely connected, and of*  
*the heinous demon-worship and mischief which are owing to them,*  
*through the ruler Kai-Lōharāsp being sent, with Būxt-Narsiḥ, from*  
*the country of Iran to Bētā-Makdis of Arūm, and their remaining*  
*in that quarter' (tr. WEST, GIPh. II. 93, SBE., xlvii. 120—121; see*  
*also SANJANA's translation, 611—612).*

The Iranian material concerning Lohrasp is scanty. In the Avesta his name occurs but once (*Yasht*, v. 105) in the prayer of Zoroaster,

<sup>1</sup> Ar. بخت نصر, but Syr. نصرة.

<sup>2</sup> Jerusalem, Ar. بيت المقدس it can scarcely denote the Temple, Hebr. בית (ה)מקדש, Syr. صهيون.

yaθa azəm hādayene  
 puθrəm yat aurvat-aspahe  
 tazməm kavaēm vištāspəm  
 anumatēe daēnaydi,

That I may bring the son of Aurvataspa, the valiant kingly Vishtaspa, to think according to the Religion.' The Pahlavi references, except those just cited, state merely the genealogy of Lohrasp and the fact that he ruled one hundred and twenty years (*Būndahishn* xxxi. 28—29; xxxiv. 7, *Pazend Jāmāspī-Nāmak* iv. ed. MODI, 71, 116), this number apparently referring to a brief dynasty, as in the case of the similar length of reign ascribed to his son Vishtaspa (WEST, *SBE.* xlvii. introd. 38). The Shah-Namah has no details of importance concerning this monarch, its account of the reign of Lohrasp being devoted for the most part to the adventures of his son Gushtasp (Vishtaspa) while still a prince (*Šāh-Nāmah*, ed. VILLERS-LANDAUER, 1431—1497, 1556—1559; MOHL, *Livre des Rois*, iv. 206—286, 359—367; PIZZI, *Libro dei Re*, iv. 539—557, v. 1—81, 160—166).

The seat of Lohrasp's capital is placed both by Firdausi and by the Arabic historians in Balkh (JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, 208—210), which Yaqt (died 1229), ed. WÜSTENFELD, 713, declares was founded by this monarch after his companion Buht Našsar had destroyed Jerusalem' (لما خرب صاحبه بخت نصر بيت المقدس), cf., however, MARQUART, *Ērānšahr*, 89). The Iranian tradition of the association of Lohrasp and Nebuchadrezzar in the expedition against Jerusalem is given in detail by Tabari (838—923), whose account is as follows (Persian version of Bel'ami, tr. ZOTENBERG, i. 491—492; cf. also Hamza of Isfahan, tr. GOTTWALDT, 25—26; Albiruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. SACHAU, 112): 'Il [Lohrasp] avait levé une grande armée, et il nourrissait les plus braves entre eux. Il envoyait Nabuchodonosor dans l'Iraq, en lui disant: La Syrie, l'Iraq, l'Yémen, et tout l'Ouest, jusqu'aux frontières de Roum, t'appartiennent. Moi, je veux rester à Balkh pour surveiller les Turcs. Nabuchodonosor partit avec une nombreuse armée de Balkh, arriva au bord du Tigris, et de là

il se tourna vers l'ouest, entra en Syrie et arriva à Damas. Il fit la paix avec les habitants de Damas, occupa la ville et envoya un général avec un corps d'armée à Jerusalem. Il y avait là un roi, descendant de David le prophète, qui conclut la paix avec le général de Nabuchodonosor. Celui-ci occupa la ville, prit des otages, des grands du peuple, et se retira'. On the outbreak of the rebellion of Zedekiah, Nabuchodonosor avec son armée partit de Damas pour Jerusalem, prit la ville d'assaut, massacra tous les habitants mâles et fit prisonnier les femmes et les enfants.' According to the same author, Nebuchadrezzar acted as the lieutenant of Lohrasp in the Egyptian campaign of 567 B. C., a statement which is repeated by Qalqashandi (died 1418) in his geography of Egypt (tr. WÜSTENFELD, *Abhandl. Gött. Ges. d. W.* 1879, 123).

The passages already cited are the only ones of importance in Oriental writings regarding the association of Nebuchadrezzar and Lohrasp. For further references to the Iranian monarch it will be sufficient to refer to JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 41.

The problem now presents itself whether this alliance is historic or fictitious. The only study on this subject of which I am aware is that by DARMESTETER, *Revue des Études juives*, xix. 53—56. He rejects the story altogether, giving an explanation which seems to me utterly fantastic and incredible, while JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, 91, 209, merely alludes to the legend without discussing it. Yet so persistent is the tradition<sup>1</sup> that the presumption seems to be in favor of its historicity, at least in part. It is at all events tolerably certain that Nebuchadrezzar had Iranian allies from Media whether Bactrians served under his banner or not. We know from a fragment of Abydenus, who probably flourished during the period of the Antonines, preserved in the Armenian translation of Eusebius that Nabopolassar had married his son Nebuchadrezzar to a Median prin-

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat analogous case of the persistency of Oriental tradition is the romance of Zariadres and Odatis, first related by Chares of Mytilene, a courtier of Alexander the Great, and recurring in Firdausi's account of the loves of Gushtasp (Vishtaspa) and Ketayuna, princess of Greece (see ROHDE, *Griechischer Roman*<sup>2</sup>, 47—54).

cess named Amytis (JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 15; *GIPh.* II. 413). The passage in question runs as follows (ed. AUCHER, I. 22): **Այս յետ Սամուելայ Սարգանայաղղոս Թագաւորեաց Վաղդէացւոցն ամն իւն. Սա աւարեաց առ Ածահակ Սարայ նահապետ և նախարար զօրս յօգնական-աթիւն, առնուլ կին որդւոյ իւրում՝ Վարուդդրոսարայ զդուստր մի Ածահակայ զԱմուհէան,** 'And after Samyges, Sardanapallos reigned over the Chaldeans twenty-one years. He sent an army to aid Aždahak,<sup>1</sup> the prince and lord of the Medes, to receive as wife for his son Nabukodrossor the daughter of Aždahak, Amuhean.' Still more important in this connection is the statement of Alexander Polyhistor (flourished 105 — 40 B. C.), *De Judæis*, frag. 24 (preserved by Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* IX. 39, 4—5) that Nebuchadrezzar was aided in his expedition against Zedekiah by a contingent of Medes sent by their monarch Astibaras. This passage, which rests upon the authority of Eupolemus, an author of the second century B. C., and seems to be historical in character, is as follows: τὸν δὲ τῶν Βαβυλωνίων βασιλέα ἀκούσαντα Ναβουχοδονόσορ τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰερεμίου<sup>2</sup> προμαντευθέντα παρακαλέσαι Ἀστιβάρην τὸν Μηδῶν βασιλέα συστρατεύειν αὐτῷ, παραλαβόντα δὲ Βαβυλωνίους καὶ Μηδούς, καὶ συναγαγόντα πεζῶν μὲν ὀκτωκαίδεκα, ἵππέων δὲ μυριάδας θώδεκα, καὶ πεζῶν ἄρματα μυρία, κτλ.<sup>3</sup> It seems probable, therefore, that Iranian generals were among the 'servants of Nebuchadrezzar' (עבדי נבוכדנאצר) who besieged Jerusalem, and the Median ruler may well have been present likewise, especially as King Jehoiakim is termed Nebuchadrezzar's 'servant' (עבד) during the three years of his enforced allegiance to Babylon (*II. Kings*, xxiv. 1). It is, moreover, barely possible that a reminiscence of the Iranian allies of Nebuchadrezzar lingers in the romance of Judith, which speaks of the Persians and Medes as having been overcome by her, ἔτριψαν Πέρσαι τὴν τόλμην αὐτῆς, καὶ Μηδοὶ τὸ θράσος αὐτῆς ἐρράχθησαν (*Judith*, xvi. 10). To this passage, however, little importance can be attached.

<sup>1</sup> Ἀστύαργης, HÜBSCHMANN, *Armenische Grammatik*, I. 33, JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 47—48.

<sup>2</sup> The imprisonment of Jeremiah by Zedekiah, *Jer.* xxxviii.

<sup>3</sup> For further references to Astibaras see JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 42.

It is, nevertheless, plain that the classical writers who base their statements on Jewish tradition agree with the Iranian records in assigning Iranian allies to Nebuchadrezzar in his expedition against Jerusalem. While, moreover, it is possible that the two campaigns against Jehoiakim and Zedekiah respectively may have become confused in the course of time, the allusions of Eupolemus to Jeremiah and of the *Dinā-ī Mainōg-ī Xirāt* to the destruction of Jerusalem both seem to refer distinctly to the second expedition and not to the first. The only discrepancy, then, between the classical and the Iranian accounts is the fact that the former name only the Medes and the latter only the Bactrians.

For this divergency three explanations may be offered: either Nebuchadrezzar's army included both Medes and Bactrians; or the Bactrians were substituted for the Medes in the Pahlavi accounts, so that the force contained no Bactrians; or Bactrians and Medes here denote one and the same people.

The first hypothesis is simple but improbable, for we should expect to find both peoples mentioned, at least in the Greek sources, which frequently allude to the two nations. Thus Bactrians and Medes served in the armies of Darius and Xerxes in their expeditions against Greece (Herodotus iii. 92, vii. 62—64, 86), while the romance of the *Cyropædia*, iv. 56, mentions the two peoples as forming part of the troops of Cyrus the Great. It is possible, however, that Eupolemus, who doubtless based his account on Jewish sources which mention the Medes but not the Bactrians, may have omitted them through over-fidelity to his authorities. The fact that the Pahlavi texts do not name the Medes in the account of the expedition against Jerusalem is consonant with the entire Avesta and Pahlavi literatures, in which there is no certain mention of the Median nation.

This leads to the second hypothesis that the Bactrians were substituted for the Medes in the Iranian accounts. Whether this is due to accident or design is a difficult problem, but it would seem that there is here a close analogy with the entire omission from the Avesta,



Pahlavi, and the *Shah-Namah* of the dynasty of the Achaemenians. In the latter case a plausible suggestion has been made by DESAI, *Cama Memorial Volume*, 29—39, who reaches the conclusion that this line of Persian kings had been entirely forgotten by the time of the composition of the Pahlavi writings during the Sassanid period. Without passing judgment on this view, which is, at all events, possible, it might likewise be assumed that the Median kingdom also had passed into oblivion in the course of time. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that Bactria was the centre of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, although the founder of the religion himself apparently came from the region of Media. Between the two sections of country, consequently, there was probably considerable religious antagonism, Bactria regarding Media as indifferent to the faith. If we add to the natural tendency of orthodoxy to exalt itself at the expense of heterodoxy the equally natural Oriental inclination toward self-glorification, it would seem almost inevitable that Bactria should be substituted for Media, and that Lohrasp, the father of the Vishtaspa who had first protected the prophet Zoroaster, should be the ally of Nebuchadrezzar instead of the obscure, perhaps already forgotten, Median king Astibaras. According to such a theory the substitution may have been either intentional, unintentional, or a mixture of the two.

The most plausible hypothesis, however, seems to be the third: that the Medes of Eupolemus and the Bactrians of the *Dīnā-ī Maimōg-ī Xirāt* and the *Dinkart* really denote one and the same people. It has already been observed that both classical and Pahlavi sources agree in attributing Iranian allies to Nebuchadrezzar in his expedition against Zedekiah. Since, then, the Jewish sources whence Eupolemus and Alexander Polyhistor drew never mention the Bactrians, while the Pahlavi texts totally ignore the Medes, it would seem that they roughly assigned the names of the Iranian peoples with whom they were most familiar to the allies of the Babylonian king. The people in question were at all events a northern race, for the Persians are rather significantly ignored in the Greek sources,

which, like the Hebrew, were thoroughly acquainted with them. On the whole, it seems to be most probable that at least the majority of these allies were Medes, as being nearer Nebuchadrezzar's capital, although it is very possible that under the Medes of Eupolemus and the Bactrians of the Pahlavi texts individuals or detachments of several Iranian peoples, including perhaps Hyrcanians, Parthians, Margians, and Arians, may have been comprised.

While the sources are meager, and in part contradictory, concerning the Iranian allies of Nebuchadrezzar in his destruction of Jerusalem, I believe the evidence is in favor of the historicity of the statements of the Pahlavi texts in so far as the Babylonian king seems to have had under his command troops from northern Iran.

Newark, New Jersey. June 11, 1904.